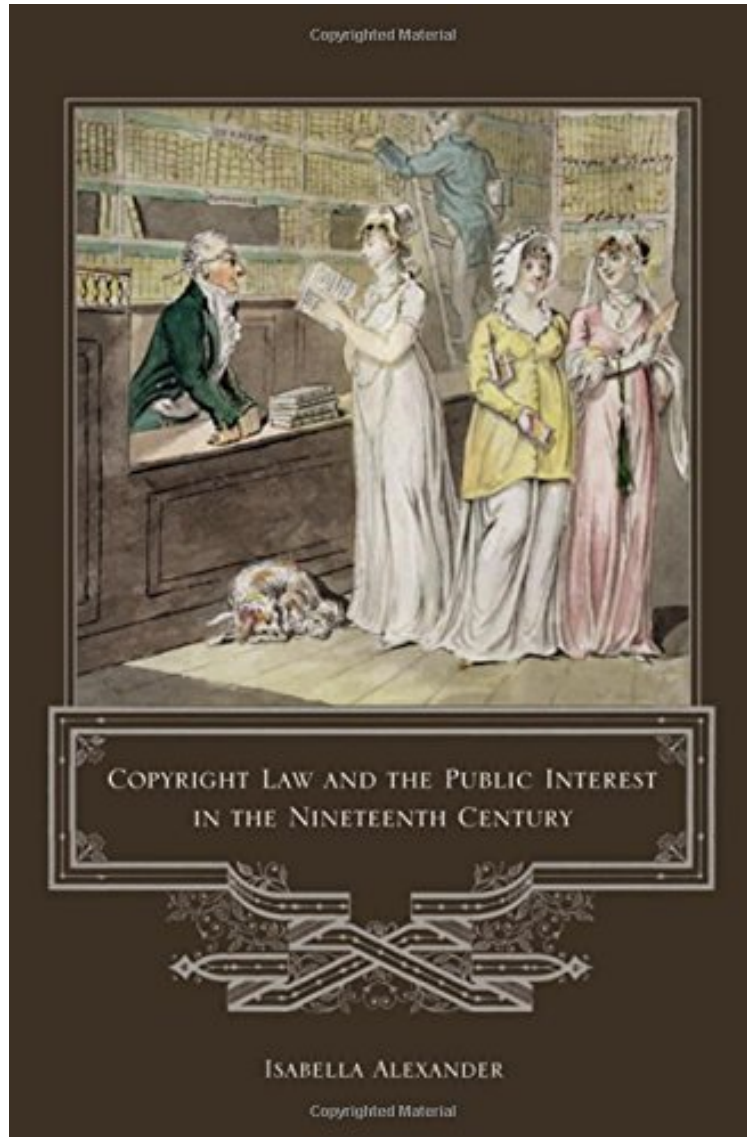


Copyright Law and the Public Interest in the Nineteenth Century

Isabella Alexander

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Isabella Alexander : Copyright Law and the Public Interest in the Nineteenth Century before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Copyright Law and the Public Interest in the Nineteenth Century:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An important workBy William PatryThe public interest in copyright is often spoken of, and often spoken of as a critical component of effective copyright laws. But what do we mean by the public interest? Dr. Alexander's work is the first book length examination of this critical issue and she has done a

brilliant job. It will be a relief to many that she has done so without the usual ideological baggage that characterizes so much that is written these days about copyright. Brava!

Copyright law is commonly described as carrying out a balancing act between the interests of authors or owners and those of the public. While much academic work, both historical and contemporary, has been done on the authorship side of the equation, this book examines the notion of public interest, and the way that concepts of public interest and the rhetoric surrounding it have been involved in shaping the law of literary copyright. Historical examinations of copyright have focused on the 18th century, but this book's main concern is with the period after 1774 in Britain. The 19th century was the period during which the boundaries of copyright, as it is known today, were drawn, and ideas of "public interest" were integral to this process, but in different and complex ways. The book engages with this complexity by moving beyond debates about the appropriate duration of copyright, and considers the development of other important features of copyright law, such as the requirement of legal deposit, the principle that some works will not be subject to copyright protection on the grounds of public interest, and the law of infringement. While the focus of the book is on literary copyright, it also traces the expansion of copyright to cover new subject matters, such as music, dramatic works, and lectures. The book concludes by examining the making of the 1911 Imperial Copyright Act, the statute upon which the law of copyright in Britain, and in all former British colonies, is based. The history traced has considerable relevance to debates over the scope of copyright law in the present day. It emphasizes the contingency and complexity of copyright law's development and current shape, as well as encouraging a critical approach to the justifications for copyright law.